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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 02908 010539Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PEPR, PINR, MASS, MOPS, ET, US
SUBJECT: PARTIAL EXPLANATION OF FALSE ETHIOPIAN ALLEGATIONS AGAINST USG OFFERED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL

1. POLCOUNS ASKED FOREIGN MINISTRY (MOFA) DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF AMERICAS DIVISON, TASSEW MAKONNEN, WHAT PURPOSE ETHIOPIANS HOPED TO ACHIEVE BY OCCASSIONAL FALSE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST USG. MOST RECENT CASES WERE MENGISTU'S CHARGE THAT 60 AMERICAN ADVISORS WERE TRAINING ERITREANS AND FIKRE-SELASSIE'S ACCUSATION THAT US WAS SUPPLYING ARMS TO SOMALIA.

2. TASSEW MADE LENGTHY REPLY, WITHOUT IDEOLOGICAL SLANT OR EMOTION, WHICH, WHILE PARTLY ETHIOPIAN RATIONALIZATION, CONTAINED ELEMENTS OF INTEREST. A SUMMARY OF TASSEW'S VIEWS FOLLOWS:

-- THE PMGSE KNOWS THAT IT WILL GET THE ATTENTION OF THE USG WHEN IT CRITICIZES US.

-- THE PMGSE WAS NOT ABLE TO GET USG ATTENTION WHEN IT TRIED A MORE COOPERATIVE FORM OF QUIET DIPLOMACY. IN THIS REGARD HE CITED THE WEAPONS OF US ORIGIN CAPTURED IN THE OGADEN. HE NOTED THAT THE PMGSE HAD FURNISHED INFORMATION ON SOME OF THE WEAPONS CAPTURED TO THE USG, AT OUR REQUEST, IN ORDER

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FOR US TO LOOK INTO ANY POSSIBLE THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT USG APPROVAL. HE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THIS AS THE ISSUE, NOT THE DIRECT TRANSFER OF US ARMS TO SOMALIA. TASSEW IMPLIED STRONGLY THAT THIS HAD BEEN A TEST CASE FOR ETHIOPIAN-US COOPERATION, AND THE RESULTS HAD CONFIRMED PMGSE SUSPICIIONS THAT THE USG WOULD NOT COOPERATE. (COMMENT: TASSEW'S FACTS IN THIS CASE ARE CORRECT; THE USG WAS NOT

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ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE MATERIEL BECAUSE OF "ESTABLISHED FILES MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES." FOR EMBASSY AND AARON MISSION TO HAVE ASKED THE PMGSE TO PROVIDE SERIAL NUMBERS AND MARKINGS WITHOUT THE REASONABLE ASSURANCE THAT THESE COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY THE HISTORY OF THE MATERIEL HAS PROVEN TO BE A NET LOSS).

-- THE PMGSE DOES NOT PROVIDE THE USG WITH INFORMATION IT HAS ON THE CONTINUING, GROWING AND DIRECT SOMALIA GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE OGADEN BECAUSE IT BELIEVES THE USG ALREADY HAS BETTER INTELLIGENCE ON THIS THAN THE PMGSE. IN THIS REGARD HE SPECIFICALLY CITED SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY.

-- TASSEW ALSO CITED WHAT THE PMGSE BELIEVE TO BE COMPLETE USG INTELLIGENCE COVERAGE OF THE OGADEN AS THE REASON FOR ITS TURNING DOWN "THE REQUEST FOR AIR OVERFLIGHT OF THE OGADEN IN THE SECOND WEEK OF MARCH."

-- TASSEW WENT ON TO SAY THAT WITH ALL THE INELLIGENCE THE PMGSE KNEW THE USG HAD ON THE ACTUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE OGADEN IT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE USG COULD CONSIDER PROVIDING ANY MILITARY MATERIEL TO THE SOMALIS AND STILL PRETEND TO WANT ETHIOPIA'S FRIENDSHIP.

3. TASSEW IS AN ETHIOPIAN NATIONALIST NOT BLINDED BY MARXIST-LENINIST IDEOLOGY. HE HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE EXPOSURE TO THE WEST, INCLUDING SEVERAL YEARS IN THE US. HIS CHILDREN

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HAVE ATTENDED AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN THE PAST. HE IS ALWAYS FRIENDLY AND GENERALLY WELL DISPOSED TO US, THOUGH HE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO HAVE MUCH POWER OR INFLUENCE. HIS VIEWS REFLECT A SINCERE DESIRE FOR IMPROVED US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS, WHICH TASSEW BELIEVES WOULD SERVE ETHIOPIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS.
MATHERON

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